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23 May 1960

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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DAILY BRIEF

I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

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USSR: Khrushchev's failure to make the customary major speech to a "welcome-home" rally in Moscow probably reflects a decision to take further political soundings both inside and outside the bloc before making any new moves. Soviet propaganda has echoed his generally moderate speech in Berlin, while the Chinese Communists--who have not disguised their opposition to a moderate policy--have not yet reacted to it.

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Mikoyan's continued absence from Moscow seems a further indication of his loss of influence.

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Ceylon: The united front formed by three important parties for the national elections scheduled for 20 July will make it difficult for Ceylon's relatively conservative United National party (UNP) to retain even the plurality it won in the elections this past March. Candidate statistics released on 20 May confirm the existence of a previously reported no-contest agreement between these three parties, two of which are leftist. The UNP faces a straight contest with the front for over a third of the 151 elective seats. In many constituencies, the combined vote of the front parties last March was greater than that given the UNP.

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III. THE WEST

N Iceland-Britain: Iceland's Justice Minister Benediktsson has categorically declared to US Ambassador Thompson that Iceland will withdraw from NATO if British naval vessels re-enter the 12-mile fishing limit established by Reykjavik in 1958. Because of Benediktsson's influential position and his straightforwardness in past dealings with the US Embassy, Thompson believes his statement must be taken seriously. The British Trawler Federation announced on 12 May that it would respect the 12-mile limit for the next three months. A British Foreign Office official has privately stated London would find it difficult to deny the trawlers Royal Navy protection should they return within the 12-mile limit.

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DAILY BRIEF

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II. ASIA-AFRICA

Conservative Party in Ceylon Faces Hard Election Fight Against United Front

The electoral agreement among three of Ceylon's major political parties for the parliamentary elections on 20 July will make it difficult for the relatively conservative United National party (UNP) to retain even the slight plurality it won in the national elections in March. The list of candidates released on 20 May indicates that 57 of the UNP's 128 candidates will face straight contests in the balloting for 151 elective seats. In March, when the UNP won 50 seats, the vote was divided among at least three contestants in all but one constituency. The number of candidates then totaled 898, compared with approximately 393 nominated for the new elections.

The second-ranking Sri Lanka Freedom party (SLFP), a moderately socialist group which won 46 seats in March, on 6 May entered into a no-contest agreement with the Trotskyite Lanka Sama Samaj party (LSSP), holder of ten seats in the present Parliament. The nominations now published confirm that the SLFP will be uncontested by the LSSP in 98 constituencies and will not run against the LSSP in 21. The Communist party, which also participated in the no-contest agreement, apparently will not be opposed by the other two parties in most of the seven seats it is contesting.

Only two of the remaining ten parties are represented by a substantial number of candidates. The Mahajana Eksath Peramuna, led by leftist politician Philip Gunawardena, is entering 55, and the Federal party, leading organization of the Tamil minority, is putting up 21 candidates.

The threat posed for the UNP by the new electoral alignment is underscored by the fact that in most of the constituencies where either the SLFP, LSSP, or Communist party placed second to the winning UNP candidate in the March election, the combined vote of these parties was considerably larger than that of the UNP.

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Icelandic Official Threatens Withdrawal From NATO If British Navy Resumes Fisheries Patrol

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[During an informal discussion of the Icelandic-British fisheries dispute, Iceland's Minister of Justice Benediktsson told US Ambassador Thompson that the Icelandic Government "with his support and on his initiative" would withdraw from NATO if British naval vessels resume patrolling within Iceland's 12-mile fishing limits. The ambassador comments that Benediktsson's statement must be taken seriously in view of his influential position within both the government and the governing Conservative party and his straightforwardness in past dealings with the embassy.]

[Benediktsson's remarks reflect the concern of the Conservative - Social Democratic government that it would not be able to resist the public clamor for drastic steps if the dispute resumes, particularly since Iceland's efforts to enforce respect for the 12-mile fishing limits, which it proclaimed unilaterally in 1958, have not been notably successful. Furthermore, the government, which already is somewhat on the defensive with the implementation of its sweeping economic reform program, is increasingly being forced to compete with the Communists and other groups which accuse it of selling out Iceland's interests on this important issue.]

[Britain seeks to avoid recurrence of the situation under which British trawlers for 18 months operated in the disputed waters under naval protection, and hopes that a compromise settlement can be negotiated. On 12 May the British Trawler Federation announced that it would respect Iceland's 12-mile fishing limit for three months, as it had been doing since mid-March when the Law of the Sea Conference convened in what proved to be an unsuccessful effort to reach international agreement on territorial waters and fishing limits. There remains considerable pressure within the British fishing industry for assertion of British rights on the high seas, however, and a Foreign Office official has stated that if the trawlers return within the 12-mile limit, it would be difficult to deny them naval protection.]

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